

Editorial

Teachers College must maintain higher standards

The National Educational Association's latest effort to increase professional competency among teachers shows a concern to upgrade the quality of teaching, but the association needs to set even higher standards.

The NEA's new publication, "An Excellent Teacher in Every Classroom," identifies four areas where teaching standards should be heightened. The first recommends that students interested in teaching must complete a "strong liberal arts curriculum and master an academic major before entering a teacher preparation program." A 2.5 grade point average should be maintained as well, according to the publication.

The second suggestion involves students successfully mastering the professional end of teaching through core courses and student teaching. The third area includes a three-year internship under the direction of experienced classroom teachers.

The last recommendation made by the NEA would require that teachers be evaluated annually.

Howard Carroll, NEA spokesman, said the recommendations were published in response to recent criticism about the quality of teaching in the United States. The publication is also part of a move to upgrade teaching standards that began in 1982, he said.

But these "rigorous standards" that the NEA is advocating are already in use at UNL, said James O'Hanlon, teachers college dean. Usually, when such recommendations to raise teaching standards are made, O'Hanlon said, other schools end up raising their standards to match those at UNL.

UNL, then, needs to increase its standards for teacher preparation even more to remain ahead of the rest of the country's teachers colleges and produce superior professional teachers.

UNL Teachers college students could be required to maintain a higher grade point average. It doesn't take that much work to maintain a 2.5, increase their in-class teaching experiences or devote more study to the pupil-teacher relationship area of the teaching profession.

The Teachers College also needs to send a message to the NEA that UNL has been encouraging outstanding teaching for years and that even higher national guidelines should be stressed.

By recommending higher teaching standards, the NEA has challenged UNL to once again, set teaching college guidelines other schools must strive to equal.

Editorial policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

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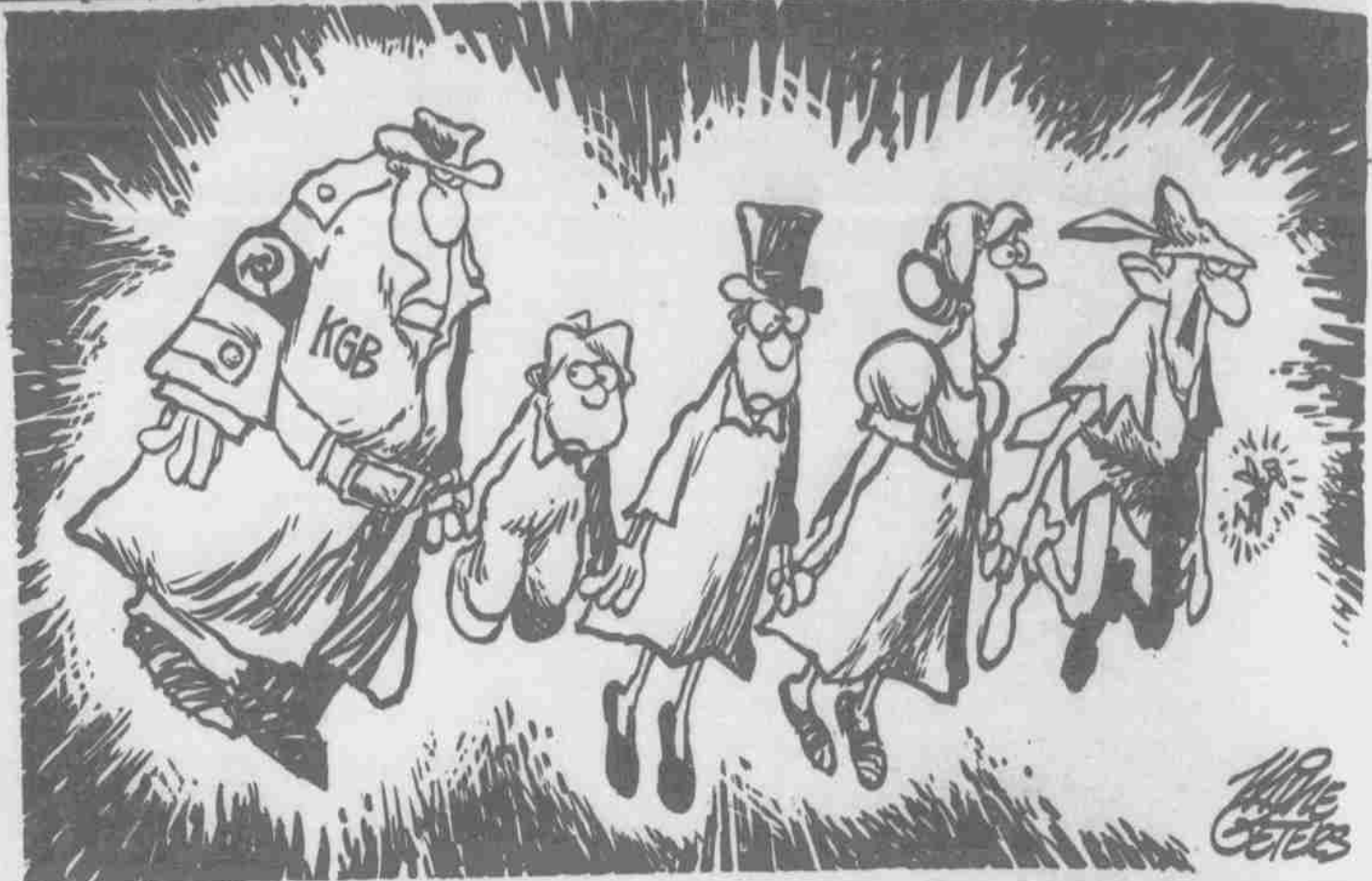
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HE'S BEEN FOLLOWING US EVER SINCE YOU GAVE HIM THAT PIXIE DUST....

Reagan imposes morals overseas

Let us imagine the following scenario: A woman goes into a public family-planning clinic in any U.S. city, looking for a way to limit or space her children.

The clinic gives her information about "natural" family planning, an updated version of the rhythm method. She is told that with careful monitoring of her vaginal mucus, tracking her temperature and with abstinence, NFP is "highly effective."



Ellen Goodman

How highly? she might ask. If the clinic shares the best research on the subject, she will be told that among careful users, 24 percent will become pregnant during one year.

Let us now imagine — this is the easy part — that she gulps and asks what else the clinic has to offer. The answer she gets is: "Nothing."

This is just a fantasy. It couldn't happen in the United States... yet. A federally funded clinic is required to offer a full range of options to each client. We called this "informed consent." In any medical encounter, a patient must be given full information before she can consent to treatment.

Change the backdrop now to a Third World country and the scenario becomes

all too real. The Reagan administration decided this summer to fund organizations that offer Third World women exactly one option: the "natural" one. Under a new directive, the Agency for International Development is passing out money, not to the medically sound, but to the politically correct.

It is all part of the successful business in exporting our political disputes. Those who can't ban birth control here are trying it overseas. The government is, in effect, dumping right-wing ideology that they can't sell in the United States (the way others have dumped banned chemicals) onto Third World markets.

The export business first began to thrive at the population conference in Mexico City last year. The U.S. government told an astonished collection of countries that we no longer believed that family planning was so vital for the developing world. The administration then went on to deny family-planning funds to the International Planned Parenthood Federation and withhold funds from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

In both cases, the "hook" that pulled the funding rug out from under these organizations was the abortion issue. But neither group was using U.S. government money for abortions. The real attack was on artificial birth control.

It is no secret that many of those opposed to abortion are also opposed to "unnatural" family planning. The American Life Lobby, for example, has opposed Title X that provides five mil-

lion American women with family planning.

Now the Reagan folk are using foreign policy, not just to appease but also to fund this right-wing constituency. Money has been taken away from the United Nations by the one hand and given to groups like the Family of the Americas Foundation by the other hand.

As a longtime AID staffer says, "This is no aberration. It's part of a concerted effort by groups opposed to family-planning programs to bring them to an end." As Faye Wattleton, leader of Planned Parenthood, puts it, "They're promoting these policies abroad because it's the only place where they can give this constituency their red meat."

A World Health Organization study showed that 35 percent of the women who use NFP in the Third World give it up after 13 months. Half of them give it up because they are pregnant. NFP supporters argue that the method isn't at fault, people are. But how do you call the method a success if the patient is pregnant?

The argument becomes theological, rather than scientific. But the main question is quite straightforward: Are women in foreign countries entitled to make the same choices from the same range of options that U.S. women have? Will we allow Third World women to decide for themselves?

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Goodman is a Pulitzer prize-winning columnist from the Boston Globe.

Letters

Brief letters are preferred, and longer letters may be edited. Writer's address and phone number are needed for verification.



ASUN decision based on fallacies

This letter concerns the ASUN Senate's decision against the non-discrimination bill (Daily Nebraskan, Aug. 29).

I would like to point out the fallacy of the comments of some senators who opposed the bill. These include the notion that sexual orientation is "personal business" and therefore does not need to be on the bill, and that the policy would be unenforceable anyway (as stated in a Lincoln Journal-Star article).

With regard to the first comment, let me remind the senator that age, race, creed and place of residence also are "personal business," but were presumably included in the bill because past experience, at this university and elsewhere, tells us that there are those who would discriminate against others on the basis of these characteristics.

The second comment is even less valid. The point of a non-discrimination

bill is not to guarantee that discrimination will not occur; bigots will be bigots, regardless of legislation to the contrary. The point of such a bill is to provide a basis upon which those who think that they have been discriminated against can seek official action and, if the complaint is found valid or enforceable for persons of minority sexual orientation than for those of a racial minority group: A discrimination complaint is filed, an investigation occurs, and the matter is decided on the basis of the evidence. It's simple, straightforward and protects the rights of all people involved.

The ludicrousness of the defenses makes it clear that the major and, perhaps, only reason the bill failed was that the senators think it is acceptable to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. The senate needs to be aware that most major U.S. universities have not only passed such a bill, they passed it years ago.

The rights of everyone on campus, regardless of sexual orientation or status, are violated when the rights of any one group are violated.

If a black student, a Jewish student or a woman is denied access to opportunity because of race, religion or gender, it affects us all.

I call on faculty and students to recognize that a non-discrimination bill at UNL is long overdue and should apply to all minority groups on campus, including those whose sexual orientation is non-traditional.

This has nothing to do with approving or disapproving of gay or lesbian lifestyles. It has to do with basic human rights and with creating a campus atmosphere in which all students can self-actualize and grow.

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